

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 122-2004



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To: Mayor David Dermer
Members of the City Commission

Date: May 20, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

**Subject: Coordination of Miami Beach Senior High School Plans with
Bayshore Neighborhood ROW Improvement Project Plans**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has been working for several years on plans to replace the existing Miami Beach Senior High School with a new facility, and City staff and community residents have had substantial input into this planning process. Currently, the plans for the new facility are substantially complete and MDCPS plans to begin initial demolition and construction on the project this summer. An issue that remains to be resolved before plans are finalized is the configuration of the City right of way adjacent to the school along the east side of Prairie Avenue and the north side of Dade Boulevard. On Prairie Avenue, MDCPS had planned on using most of the strip of right of way as a student drop-off and pick-up lane. On Dade Boulevard, MDCPS planned a bus drop off lane running nearly the entire length of the school property.

During the community planning process for the Bayshore Neighborhood Right of Way Improvement Project, residents of Prairie Avenue adjacent to the school specifically requested a solution to the haphazardly parked cars, trash, and sparse landscaping which characterized the east side of their street. The Basis of Design Report for the Bayshore Neighborhood which was subsequently issued and approved by the City Commission called for substantially enhanced landscaping in the ROW along the east side of Prairie Avenue which would prevent parking and screen the view of the school. MDCPS's design consultant for the project was made aware of this conflict last fall. MDCPS was under the impression that they had final City approval for the project as they had made a presentation to the City Design Review Board in August 2003. However, the item was presented as a discussion item only and the issues and concerns subsequently raised by City staff were not brought up at the time.

City staff met with MDCPS and their design consultant to discuss the Prairie Avenue issue. At the initial meeting, it became clear that there were also numerous issues related to the Dade Boulevard frontage of the project. City staff subsequently met several times with MDCPS and their design consultant and were able to resolve most of the outstanding issues on Dade Boulevard. The planned bus lane was reduced by half, trees and irrigation were added, the narrow sidewalk that currently runs directly adjacent to Dade Boulevard was widened and set back from the street, and an access driveway on MDCPS property to the City Public Work's Yard was added.

However, City staff and MDCPS were not able to reach agreement on the treatment of the Prairie Avenue ROW. City staff are concerned that the proposed drop-off pick-up lane will be used for parking after school hours which would not be in keeping with the intent of the BODR improvements. The City offered a compromise that reduced the drop-off pick-up lane by approximately half, allowing the BODR improvements to be implemented on the other half of the ROW area. This compromise did not meet MDCPS requirements.

At their last meeting with MDCPS on May 17th, City staff agreed to pursue a new solution in which the drop-off lane would not be marked as a separate lane or spaces, therefore decreasing the likelihood that it would be used for after hours parking. This solution would also provide more street trees and landscaping to screen the school and beautify the street than would have been implemented by the BODR improvements. It was agreed that the City and MDCPS would hold a public meeting in early June to determine resident support for the modified Prairie Avenue plan. If the plan is well-received, the City Commission could then approve the required modification to the Bayshore Neighborhood BODR.

The Administration will continue to pursue a solution to this issue which addresses to the greatest extent possible the concerns of the City, MDCPS, and the community.


JMG/ROMITH/DPS